LETTER

from a GENTLEMAN in the Country to his FRIEND in the CITY.

My Dear Friend,

THE Miſcarriage of Sham-plots in the eſcape of my L. S. we perceive is now to be revenged on the F. party, for Orders it is ſaid are iſſued out for their proſecution with you in *London*, and our Tools are all a whetting for the ſame work here. The Antients were wont to ſay, *Quandoque delirunt Reges, plectuntur Achivi*, and the Fs. are ſtill ſure to be the *Achivi* here, upon whom we ſee every *Delirium* of the Government muſt be put. But for Gods ſake, my Friend, was it the F. that put the Government upon trying the E. of S. upon ſuch Evidence that a man could hardly have ſalved his Conſcience, to have hanged a Cat on their Teſtimony? Or were they Fs. that were of the Jury? Nay you ſee they have gotten a trick to except againſt, and ſuffer no Fs. to be in ſuch Jurys; but how Legal ſuch exceptions are, let them take care to juſtifie that are concerned in them. In the mean while, ſince the Fs. have no hand therein; how comes it to be charged ſo ſolely, or indeed at all upon their Accounts?

Why the Fs. rejoyced at his deliverance, 'tis true they did, and ſo did every honeſt, true and hearty Proteſtant in *England* as it was their Duty to do. For they rejoyced, not only that my L. of S. was delivered, but that the whole Proteſtant cauſe and intereſt was delivered with him. So that had my L. of S. been but *Colledged*, the joy of the other Party had been the ſame, and in this reſpect, the deliverance of the Proteſtant Party was ſo great, and every way worthy that rejoycing, which was expreſſed thereat, that I do believe in my Conſcience, that if they had not more *Seraphick* ways of ſhewing their Joyes in Heaven than we on Earth, the Saints and Martyrs in Glory would have made all Heaven rang with that Days Joy.

But it ſeems the poor Fs. muſt do Penance for it, and that their Joy at the burning of the Pope, and my L. of S. deliverance muſt be expiated by a freſh perſecution on them. Well, what cannot be hopen muſt be abiden, and I hope will be to, with ſuch a Chriſtian peaceable and becoming carriage, as will quite ſpoil their deſign, who would fain force them by their Oppreſſions to make a Diſturbance. But if this be the way to get a Tory P. as ſome, who have the Art of looking into a Milſtone do judge, is one meaning in this new run on the Fs. I confeſs I am utterly out in my Methods of thinking. For if I underſtand the Fs. aright, they are a People much eaſilyer to be led (and I was about to ſay be miſled too) than driven, a large, if not a too large experience, whereof you had in the choice of your preſent Lord Mayor.

Ay, but we muſt not call the puniſhing Fs. a perſecution, for they are rebellious forſooth, and ſuffer but by lawful Magiſtrates, and but ſuch puniſhment as the Law appoints. No more did the Martyrs in Q. *Marys* Days, wherefore if theſe be Rebels ſo were they, for they could not conform to thoſe Laws of Worſhip, that the Magiſtrate commanded then, no more can theſe now. Nay our bleſſed Saviour, and his holy Apoſtles ſuffered by Laws and Magiſtrates alſo; and yet I do not think that any good Chriſtian, reckons them rebellious againſt the Laws or Magiſtrates either.

Our Fopps indeed keep a huge coyl for their Religion eſtabliſht by Law, as if we had no other fund for our Religion than Statute Law, or that the Verity thereof depended upon humane Sanction; whereas I hope there is no rational man thinks that the Chriſtian Religion was worſe in the Apoſtles days, and in the Primitive time, when it had no National Laws to ſupport it, than it is now: And therefore, if we will take our Religion from off the Authority of the Goſpel, and found it only upon the Authority of humane Laws, we ſhall be too like that Fool in the Goſpel that left the Rock, and laid his Foundation in the Sand.

For if we make the only Teſt of our Profeſſion to be the Municipal Laws of the Land, Popery will have a far greater Vote for its Verity, than the Prote-

ſtant Religion. For who knows not that *France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Italy*, and many other Countrys have eſtabliſhed Popery by the Laws of their Land: And yet I believe, no body thinks that Popery is any whit the better, becauſe of that Eſtabliſhment. Wherefore, if we had no other Teſtimony to ſupport our Proteſtant Religion than the Laws of the Land, I doubt we ſoon ſhall be brought by the Lee.

Our ſpiritual Infantry, the leſſer Fry of Clergy wiggle about merrily, wag their Tails, and are mightily pleaſed with the News of falling upon the Fanaticks. But the middle ſort of Clergy, who are generally the moſt moderate, ſeem troubled at it; for it is in Church as it is in State, when you are paſt *Lords*, and a few new made Sir *Reverences*, you muſt fall to *Tapſters* and *Fidlers*, for all betwixt thoſe two extreams, God be thanked are on the other ſide, and would willingly enjoy peace and properties themſelves, and as a means thereto are all for Moderation.

What ſucceſs will attend this freſh attempt to diſturb the Diſſenters I cannot tell; but I can tell you what the Country ſay. They ſay theſe Biſhops will never leave till they have brought the Kingdom into bloud and confuſion again. And I ſhould be of the ſame opinion, but that I obſerve, God Almighty hath ever yet, when they have been engaged in this work, thrown in ſomething or other that has diſturbed and took them off from their intentions, quite beſides their expectation.

One of our Prelates diſcourſing D. *Y.* concerning the reaſon of his abanddoning our Church, was anſwered, that he liked not that Religion, where one Party perſecutes another, and I'le aſſure you that the Fanaticks hope, that the ſame kind Providence will ſtill appear on their behalf, and render this effort as in effectual, as any yet have been before it. However, we are heartily glad to hear that there is ſuch a continued kindneſs ſhewn to the *French Proteſtants*, even whilſt there is ſuch a quite contrary uſage to our own, which makes us doubt in the Country, that it is more their being *Engliſh Men*, than Fanaticks, that makes them to be thus run upon, and that if our Diſſenters would but turn *French*, they might have their Liberty too, as well as they.

We cry out upon the *Emperor*, and *French* King, becauſe they ſuffer themſelves to be led by their Jeſuitical Councils to perſecute their Proteſtant Subjects: But if it be condemnable in them who are Popiſh Princes, and as ſuch under a greater tye to be ſevere to their Proteſtants to promote and indulge their own Profeſſion; for Gods ſake my Friend who ſhall find out a juſtification for Proteſtant Princes, when they practiſe the ſame on their Proteſtant People, which they condemn in Papiſts?

Beſides, you find none of the Popiſh Governments fall upon their Catholick Subjects, and perſecute them, becauſe they differ in opinion or diſſent from one another tho all read-men know, that the differences between the *Jeſuits* and the *Janſeniſts*, the *Dominicans*, and the *Franciſcans* are greater both in Doctrine and Principles, and managed with greater heats, than any among the Proteſtants. No they thank you, tho they worry you, yet they are not ſo much worſe than Wolves, as to worry, devour, and deſtroy one another too; that's a ſtrain of folly and madneſs, beyond any that the Church of *Rome* ever arrived at, and a Barbariſm fit only to be acted by ſuch Proteſtants, whoſe practiſes in all things elſe as well as this, ſhews them worſe than Papiſts. For the Papiſts could never deſtroy the Proteſtant Church ſo to rights, as theſe Vermine do; for theſe like Wolves in ſheeps cloathing lying among us, and being reckoned of us, have greater advantages, and opportunities to ruine us, than the publick profeſſed Papiſts have; and therefore are as much worſe than they as a *Renegado* is worſe than a Turk.

Wherefore, if the Government would pleaſe, now their hand is in, if it were but for the *Betts* ſake, to prove this kind of Proteſtants a little further, who are the forwardeſt and fierceſt in this Perſecution-work by declaring for Popery. If the whole pack of them did not leave the Proteſtant Profeſſion, and fall in full cry with ſuch a Declaration, I would be content to loſe my life on the wager; for they are ſuch branded Beaſts, and of ſuch a dapple kind, that they can make as good a black as white, and as wicked Papiſts as they are Proteſtants. But it is high time to tell you that I am.

Your Humble Servant

Chriſtmas Eve.

304208